

legal immigration while strengthening our efforts to restrict illegal immigration.

Remarks on the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on Hebron and an Exchange With Reporters

January 14, 1997

The President. A few minutes ago, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat called me to tell me that they have reached agreement on the Israeli redeployment in Hebron. This achievement brings to a successful conclusion the talks that were launched in Washington last September, and it brings us another step closer to a lasting, secure Middle East peace.

Once again, the Israelis and the Palestinians have shown they can resolve their differences and help to build a brighter future for their children by finding ways to address each other's concerns. And once again, the forces of peace have prevailed over a history of division.

Israel will promptly redeploy its troops. The parties will establish practical security arrangements to strengthen stability and improve cooperation. There will also be an agreed roadmap for further redeployment by Israel. The Palestinians have reaffirmed their commitments, including their commitment to fight terrorism.

I thank Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat for their leadership. King Hussein also deserves special recognition and gratitude for his work for peace. I also want to express my appreciation to President Mubarak for his support. Finally, let me thank Secretary Christopher, who worked on this all weekend long, and our United States team. And especially let me thank our Special Middle East Coordinator, Dennis Ross, who has worked so hard and so long to help conclude this agreement.

Today's agreement is not an end in itself. Bringing its words to life will require active and continuous cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian officials. It will demand every effort to stop those who would choose confrontation over cooperation. In short, this is not a time to relax. It is a time to reinforce our commitment to peace.

That's why it is so important that the Israelis and the Palestinians have agreed to continue to work on the remaining issues contained in their agreements. As they do, the United States will do all it can to help. We will do everything we can to build a just and durable peace, a peace that will mean a better life for Israelis, for Palestinians, for all the people of the Middle East.

And now I'd like to ask Mr. Berger to come up here and give you the details from our perspective of what's happened over the last couple weeks.

Q. Sir, if it took so long for this agreement to be worked out, sir, on a relatively minor point of redeploying troops in Hebron, what does—is it a bad omen for the other unresolved issues that they now face?

The President. No. I think it's a good omen, because—keep in mind this agreement was not just about the Hebron redeployment, it was about a timetable for further redeployment, it was about other arrangements that would shape their future working relationship. So this is—there's much more in this agreement now. And Mr. Berger can answer more questions about it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; King Hussein I of Jordan; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Remarks on Mexico's Repayment of Loans and an Exchange With Reporters

January 15, 1997

The President Good morning, and welcome. Ambassador Silva Herzog, Chairman Greenspan, Secretary Rubin, Deputy Secretary Summers and other members of the administration, Mr. McLarty, Mr. Berger, Congressman Richardson, Congressman Matsui, Congressman Frank, ladies and gentlemen. Just a few moments ago, President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico called me to tell me that Mexico had issued instructions to repay the remaining \$3.5 billion of the \$13½ billion the United States loaned